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ABSTRACT

The career education concept should replace vocational education so that more of the American people can receive the benefits that are being provided students in vocational education. It is necessary to begin to construct a sound, systematized relationship between education and work, a system which will make it standard practice to teach every student about occupations and the economic enterprise and which will increase career options for each individual. The National Center for Educational Research and Development is concentrating on the development of three model career education programs. The first model, oriented directly toward the school setting, would affect kindergarten through junior college by reshaping the curriculum to focus directly on the concept of career development. The second model would be created, developed, operated, and supported primarily by business in companionship with the schools. This program would concentrate on the 13 to 20 age group who have left school without needed competencies. The final model is a plan to use the home and community institutions to reach and teach persons with limited formal school and skills needed in successful employment. Such programs will give vocational education the national prestige that it needs. (GE)

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CAREER EDUCATION - MORE THAN A NAME*

By S. P. Marland, Jr.
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Speaking in Houston earlier this year, as you may have heard, I had occasion to urge that the term vocational education be dropped in favor of career education. Since that change would result in different job titles for you, not to mention a rather significant alteration in your professional lives, I think I owe you an explanation.

Let me say first of all that I was not indulging in an empty image-building exercise, the mania that leads us into such aberrations as renaming dog catchers canine administrators. A dog catcher by any other name will still catch dogs. But career education, as I envision it, will be, to mix my mammals, a horse of quite a different color. While it will necessarily and properly embrace many of vocational-technical education's skill-producing activities, it will also reach a large percentage of students now unexposed to the usual vocational education offerings. Instead of the slightly less than 25 percent of high school students now enrolled in some kind of vocational skills programs, for example, the career education concept could affect, and affect in a fundamental fashion, as high as 80 percent of those young people.

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My motivation in suggesting Career Education is to acknowledge that the best of our vocational education is very good indeed but does not, under its present stereotype, serve enough students. Vocational courses, cooperative work experience, occupational training -- by whatever name, this kind of education has provided millions of Americans with very usable skills. Equally important, it has given them a sense of the world that lies beyond the classroom. Too much of the rest of education fails significantly in this respect.

It is precisely vocational education's sense of continuity that should be extended to all education. The connection between education and a person's life work should be as obvious to others engaged in education as it is to you who are experts in the field. But the fact is that millions of children are processed through the classrooms of this Nation every year in a kind of mindless shuffle that hardly deserves the name of education. How many of these young people, so many the victims of the general curriculum, will succeed in life, we can only guess at. But I suspect that those who do achieve some measure of success will be a very tiny minority of heroic types who can overcome the gross handicap of an inadequate public school preparation. For the rest, the great majority, personal failure patterned after and largely caused by the failure of those who sought to educate them is predictably certain.

I have spoken out against the secondary-level general track before and I feel impelled to do so again today. Almost all of the shockingly high number of unemployed youth are products of the general curriculum and we can expect small improvement until the general curriculum is completely done away with in favor of a system of high school education with but two exits -- continued education or employment -- and nothing else.

This is not to suggest that the concept of career education should be associated only with high school. Indeed, it is extremely dangerous, as we are finding out, to wait until the high school years to begin to acquaint the student with the idea of applying what he has learned, to teach him the purposes of education as distinct from the forms of education.

In Germany, Poland, and a number of other countries -- some democratically governed, some not -- the situation is quite different and, I would think, far more conducive to getting the youngster started toward making the difficult decisions of life -- who and what each would want to be, and the kind of work or continued education necessary to accomplish the purpose. Work experience in these countries begins in the very earliest years of formal education. Here in the United States, by contrast, teachers encounter any number of nine-year-olds and ten-year-olds who have only the vaguest notion of what their fathers do for a living. It has even become a kind of upper-class ideal in this country for the boy or girl to put off thinking about a possible occupation until after completion of the baccalaureate degree which, by the time they receive it, may well be a surplus item. We have an excess of such degrees now in the aerospace industry and in certain parts of the teaching profession and the National Planning Association predicts eventual excess of bachelor's degrees in every field except the health professions. The Department of Labor indicates that in the near future 80 percent of all jobs will be within the range of the high school diploma.

The consequences of isolation from the realities of the workaday world are painfully apparent in households everywhere. One distraught father, whose son like so many other sons and daughters these days dropped out of college for no apparent purpose, offered an explanation that seems

as good as any. "A lot of kids," he said, "don't know what they want to do...because they've never done anything."

At the other end of the economic spectrum it is less a matter of indecision than inability. We daily witness the brutal rejection of untrained youngsters by our increasingly technological society because they cannot compete in the one area in which man is clearly superior to his machines -- the ability to think.

Consequently, we have in this country the highest youth unemployment rate in the world and the relentless advance of technology is making the situation explosively worse.

Of all the black girls under the age of 25, 30 percent are unemployed, a higher rate of joblessness than that suffered by this country during the great depression of the 1930's. The jobless rate among young black men stands at 25 percent. Even whites between the ages of 16 and 25 are unemployed at probably three times the rate of the labor force as a whole. And in the severe pockets of unemployment -- the inner cities expecially -- the percentage of jobless youth balloons to many times these national averages I have been citing.

By 1975 we expect the unskilled to account for less than five percent of the labor force or something in the neighborhood of 4.5 million jobs. Yet Bureau of Labor Statistics projections indicate that we will still have more than 3.5 million young people with no salable skills trying to squeeze themselves into this sad five percent category. For them there will literally be no room at the bottom.

This tragic situation clearly indicates that America's educational efforts are failing or at least that they are not attuned to the realities of our times. If we are to correct that failure and if education is to serve properly its national purpose, then we must bridge the gulf between man and his work. We in education must be actively concerned with the boys and girls in our charge not just until they receive a diploma but until they have made the transition from student to worker or are enrolled in post-secondary education. Our job is not done properly, in other words, until each and every one of those youngsters is capable of developing a clear sense of direction in life and is able to make a responsible career choice.

We must also be concerned and active on behalf of adults who cannot supply the skills and knowledge society now demands. Education must help upgrade the job skills of these men and women, and retrain them where necessary. I strongly believe that we must also make a particularly imaginative and energetic effort on behalf of the returning Vietnam veterans. The problem of readjustment to the requirements of civilian life, always severe, is far more difficult in their case because there is less enthusiasm in the country to receive and help them than there was for the veterans of World War II and Korea.

It is of course one thing to propose a new system of career education and quite another to attempt to answer the variety of questions that the proposition evokes. What would career education be like in actual operation? How would it differ from the skill training that some have seen as the province of vocational-technical education? What difficulties lie in the way of accomplishing the very broad and demanding objectives that career education implies at all levels of in and out of school experience?

The importance of finding those answers cannot be overstated. It is flatly necessary to begin to construct a sound, systematized relationship between education and work, a system which will make it standard practice to teach every student about occupations and the economic enterprise, a system that will markedly increase career options open to each individual and enable us to do a better job than we have been doing of meeting the manpower needs of the country.

Because I am so convinced ofthe urgency of this matter, I have directed that the Office of Education research staff give major emphasis to this single area until we are successful in designing a workable system of career education.

The National Center for Educational Research and Development -- under the direction of Harry Silberman -- is at this moment concentrating much of its creative resources on the development of three model career education programs for use in schools, businesses, and homes. We believe these models, initially developed by Dr. Edwin Rumpf and the Division of Vocational and Technical Education, will provide useful alternatives to present practice. They represent to our knowledge the first comprehensive attempt to devise a career education system to serve vittually all Americans.

School-Based Model

The first model, oriented directly toward the school setting, would affect kindergarten through junior college, reshaping the curriculum so as to focus it directly on the concept of career development. It would tie the school closely to the activities of local community, local business, and local industry. Its principal objective would be to guide each student either to a job -- a solid rewarding job, not dead-end labor -- or to further formal education.

The essential elements in this model are coordination among the various grade levels and the establishment of practical relationships with those outside the school who strongly influence the student's choice of a career. Parents and counselors play a crucial role in guiding young people toward a career by encouraging them to set their own values and make their own decisions, not to have values and decisions imposed upon them. For this reason the school-based model should be combined with adult education efforts, especially among our more educationally disadvantaged population.

The school-based model will incorporate a number of the innovative concepts that are being developed in the vocational education programs that you represent. Specific skills training at the high school level is an important component of the school-based model. I certainly do not believe that general job information of some kind -- the old industrial arts and vocational counselor apparatus -- produces useful job skills. Under career education it would be the intention that every youth would leave the school system with a marketable skill. Otherwise career education would be no improvement over the present general curriculum.

Employer-Based Model

The second model career education system would be created, developed, operated, and supported primarily by business in companionship with the schools. The idea would be that a group of industrial, commercial, and other kinds of firms would collaborate in developing the program for the benefit of the 13-to-20 age group. These are the boys and girls who have left school without acquiring the kinds of understanding and competence they need to live fulfilled lives as free men and women in a free society.

This model would combine general education, vocational training, and work experiences carefully selected for their career development possibilities. Not just one but several part-time jobs would be open to each student to enable him to pick an occupational area he wants rather than accept the only thing he is offered.

We foresee the possibility that a firm of management specialists retained by the schools would operate this program and assume the principal responsibility for seeing to it that specific objectives were accomplished. We are also looking into the design of suitable incentives to encourage participation by businessmen -- possibly through such arrangements as tax credits and performance contracts. And of course there would be the powerful built-in incentive for business to join this program in terms of the opportunity to find, train, and retain high-quality employees.

Home/Community Based Model

The final model, supportive of the first two, is a plan to use the home and community institutions as career education centers. Our purpose would be to reach and teach individuals with limited formal schooling or persons whose limited basic knowledge and restricted personal skills hold them back from job opportunities or job advancement. By combining effective adult education with vocational education we can open career opportunities to millions of adults who presently have little or no hope of advancement.

Women are a special target for this career education approach. Increasingly, women are going into the world of work -- both for economic reasons and for reasons of personal fulfillment. They are held back by unfortunate stereotypes about so-called "appropriate" women's roles, by their own limited self-concepts, and by lack of preparation for effectively

combining the occupational and homemaker roles. They need educational programs of the kind this home-based model can provide to broaden their vocational horizons and prepare them to be increasingly active in both domestic and commercial worlds.

We believe that occupational training of this sort can be effectively transmitted by television. The model would emulate the highly successful Sesame Street preschoolers' program, providing information in lively, entertaining, attention-getting style. Operating by means of educational TV and employing cassette techniques, the program would offer information on career options and general background for the viewer on what it would be like to work as a computer programmer, health occupations specialist, or whatever. The viewer would be motivated to enhance his employability and develop awareness of values associated with work. Given a career choice, he could then continue the cassette instruction by arrangement with the local schools, finally qualifying for examination and placement.

However these pilot efforts eventually work out, there is no question that putting a comprehensive program of career education together will demand all the imagination, energy, and good will that we can muster. And, as you may well be reflecting, it will also require money in generous amounts -- much of it from the Federal treasury. In this connection we can be encouraged by the consistently strong record of the Congress in supporting vocational education since the time of the first world war. We are only beginning to feel the impact of the most recent major legislation, the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, in the growth of total vocational enrollment to 8,780,000 in Fiscal Year 1970. And I particularly want to congratulate you on helping a million more high school students to receive vocational skills this year compared with the year before.

Postsecondary vocational enrollments in Fiscal Year 1970 topped the one-million level, an increase of more than 40 percent over 1969. The pattern of growth is also convincingly demonstrated in the areas of greatest need with almost a million disadvantaged and handicapped youngsters enrolled in vocational training this year for the first time. State and local governments have responded admirably to the Federal initiatives, putting more than five dollars of their own money into vocational education for every dollar of Federal investment, an expenditure far exceeding the matching-funds requirements of the Federal programs.

Nevertheless, the picture is not entirely bright. While Congress has increased authorizations for vocational programs by more than 400 percent for the 1965-1972 period, appropriations have been lagging. It is not unusual of course for appropriations to fail to match authorizations. But what troubles me -- and, I suspect, you -- is that the gap in terms of vocational education has widened considerably in recent years. The percentage of authorized funds that have been appropriated for vocational programs shows a decline from 88 percent in Fiscal 1965 to only 44 percent in the current fiscal year, a movement that must be reversed if we are to carry out the intention of Congress as well as covering the broader expectations implicit in career education.

I am distressed by this situation and I intend to use whatever influence I have to seek restoration of this percentage to a respectable level. In view of the critical unemployment situation among our young people, I would not think it unreasonable to ask for the full amount Congress has authorized -- more than a billion dollars.

I am also distressed by the decision to reduce the request for vocational education funding in the Fiscal 1972 budget by $25 million at a time when it should be increasing substantially. Again I am bound to say that I disagree and will argue for restoration of these and additional funds in Fiscal 1973 which will be my first year of budget influence. We have received reactions from the States to the proposed cut and their position, as you are aware, is uniformly and understandably in opposition to this budget treatment.

There is also the matter of staffing within the Office of Education, where the trend toward an ever lowered number of personnel has been of considerable concern throughout the entire vocational education field. In 1965, when the Division of Vocational and Technical Education program money stood at less than half the present level, the headquarters and field staff consisted of 141 positions. Despite the notable increase in funds and programs that has since taken place, the staff has sustained accelerating cuts until today it stands at approximately a third of its 1965 level.

I pledge to you today to do whatever I can within a very restricted personnel situation to restore the manpower levels for the future administration of our vocational-technical programs. For I want to make it clear that I have not cited these unfortunate personnel and funding trends for the purpose of belaboring the past. But since I am acutely conscious of your feelings about these matters, I wanted you to know that I am well aware of the situation and that I am not happy with it. I want to work with you, as we plan for our Fiscal 1973 budget, to seek substantially increased appropriations, to expand our vocational education staff, and to do whatever

else seems necessary in order to provide you in the States with appropriate levels of financial and technical assistance.

Before we leave this matter of funding, I would like to comment briefly on prospects for vocational education under the Administration's planned revenue sharing program which is now before the Congress. Since the Federal money supporting vocational education is scattered through several pieces of legislation, it is not a simple task to lump all the programs together. Yet I believe that there is no reason to fear the enactment of revenue sharing would have the effect of diminishing the total amount of that support. In fact, if revenue sharing were to go into effect in Fiscal '72, it is clear that Federal support for vocational education would show a substantial increase.

In any case, it seems to me that the educational revenue sharing approach provides distinct advantages to the States and communities apart from any expansion of funds, as important a consideration as increased money unquestionably is.

First, the proposal -- if enacted into law by the Congress, as I surely hope it will be -- will greatly simplify the administration of Federal funds both in Washington and in the States and communities. Approximately 28 legislative titles, and an even greater number of individual programs, would be consolidated, freeing government personnel at all levels from many of the complicated routines that now consume a significant portion of the staff's time. Relieved of much of this burden, both Federal and State personnel could devote far more of their knowledge and experience to the direct service of the children and adults who need their help. Our attention should be on education, not processing papers.

The second advantage that would accrue to the States from enactment of education revenue sharing would be greater flexibility. Those of you who work with the administration of Federal programs in the State offices would experience far more freedom in the use of vocational funds -- freedom to select the applications that make the most sense to you, and freedom from obligatory adherence to a plan not necessarily a true reflection of local needs. Washington's intentions were good, as everyone would concede, in establishing the categorical approach of the 1960's, but the time has come when a shift to greater local direction and greater local responsibility is clearly necessary.

If a particular State so desired, for example, it would be free to transfer up to 30 percent of the funds allotted to any of four categories under education special revenue sharing --- vocational education, aid to Federally impacted areas, aid to the handicapped, and general support services. The fifth category --- aid to the disadvantaged --- is properly exempt from the transfer clause. Under this arrangement, a State could transfer funds to vocational education. In fact its allotment could be increased to as much as twice the basic amount though such a major readjustment of priorities could only come about if you, as advocates of vocational education, could make a very strong and a very convincing case.

Indeed, your powers of persuasion will be a vital factor in determining how vocational education would fare under revenue sharing. The burden of leadership in strengthening your State's program would necessarily fall directly to you and to those educators, administrators, businessmen, and community leaders you call to your cause. It would be up to you to see that vocational education received its share not only of special revenue sharing funds but general revenue sharing funds as well. A solid combination of both can produce a far stronger, far more effective vocational program --- career program --- than the present system will allow. Of that I am confident.

In closing, let me offer you once again my congratulations on the achievements of vocational education and my personal pledge of support in the difficult and challenging days that lie ahead. If the Office of Education has faltered in the past with respect to your programs, I propose now to make Career Education one of five high priorities, along with aid to the disadvantaged, education of the handicapped, racial integration, and educational research and development. And I intend to give it more funds, more people, and a larger degree of national prestige than it has yet achieved.

In return I ask your help and the benefit of your counsel in the advancement of the career education concept that I have outlined to you this morning. These ideas are not fixed. Indeed, there is nothing we want or need more than suggestions and recommendations from you who have been deeply and professionally involved with every aspect of career education. Our efforts will come to little unless supported and enlivened by your thoughts and convictions. It is, in sum, our purpose to turn the world of vocational-technical education around to the point where it enjoys at least the level of concern, support, pride, and excellence now favoring the college-entrance program.